

GRAPPLE GRAMMAR: JIGSAW WORK FOR 9'S AND 10'S ON GRAMMAR

The following group work (described by Genevieve Habib at Governor Simcoe) operates in three rounds during which time students become expert on particular problems in the mechanics of writing. They teach each other the problems, rules or principles involved and, in the end, the teacher takes up residual problems before a final test and practical application in editorial sessions.

ROUND ONE

At this stage, students are grouped in threes to become expert on one of the following nine areas of grammar. The general goal is to prepare to teach this aspect of language to others in a "home" group.

The teacher supplies grammar reference texts from which students can compose lessons and examples on their area of expertise each time they are in a teaching situation. Each student teacher is responsible for developing a single page of material on the area of expertise. This should include **1) a clear statement of the rule or principle involved, 2) illustrative materials 3) sufficient practice material for teaching others to understand in various situations the operation of the rule or principle.** Areas of expertise:

A. THE SENTENCE

1. fragments
2. parallelism
3. run-ons

B. PUNCTUATION

4. the colon
5. the semi-colon
6. the comma

C. AGREEMENTS

7. subject/verb
8. pronoun/antecedent
9. verb tenses

ROUND TWO

Combine to Establish three "home" groups in which all nine members develop expertise on one of the three main areas: sentences, punctuation and agreements. Group members share the definitions, examples and some practise exercises.

The teacher should take some time with each of the three groups at this stage to see that there is general understanding and accuracy of examples being passed around.

Round three

Nine further and final home groups (of three people each) can now be established in each of which there is an expert on one of the three large areas.

Testing

When the group work is done, the teacher leads one or two classes in which residual problems are covered. There is then a general test. Finally, students can be asked to edit each other's written work for the kinds of problems encountered in this work.

THE FUMBLERULES OF GRAMMAR

1. Never use a preposition to end a sentence with.
2. Remember to never split an infinitive.
3. Avoid run-on sentences they are hard to read.
4. Don't use no double negatives.
5. Use the semicolon properly, always use it where it is appropriate; and never where it isn't.
6. Reserve the apostrophe for its proper use and omit it when it's not needed.
8. Verbs have to agree with their subject.
9. No sentence fragments.
10. Avoid commas, that are not necessary.
11. If you re-read your work, you will find on re-reading that a great deal of repetition and useless language can be avoided by re-reading and editing.
12. A writer must not shift your point of view.
13. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
14. Don't over-use exclamation marks!!!
15. Place pronouns as close as possible, especially in long sentences of, say, 10 or more words like this one, to their antecedents.
16. Write all adverbial forms correct.
17. Don't use contractions in formal writing.
18. If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.
19. Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixed metaphors.
20. Everyone should be careful to use a singular pronoun with singular nouns in their writing.
21. Last but not least, avoid cliches like the plague.

Can you add any fumblerules of your own?

EDITORIAL CHECKLIST

- SV Subject/Verb Agreement**
- Problem: Subjects and their verbs agree in person and number. Correction: Locate the verb and its real subject.
- T(ense) Verb Tense Consistency**
- Problem: Wrong verb tense used. Correction: Verb tenses organize events into time logic. Change verb tense.
- PR Pronoun Agreement/Reference**
- Problem: The marked pronoun either doesn't clearly refer to its antecedent, or doesn't agree with it in number or gender. Correction: Check what word the pronoun refers to. Make reference or agreement clear.
- SF (frag) Sentence Fragment**
- Problem: The marked sentence is not complete. Correction: Supply a main subject or verb group to make a full sentence.
- SS Spliced Sentences**
- Problem: Two sentences jammed together with a comma, or no punctuation at all. Correction: Connect properly (other punctuation, or an appropriate conjunction), or divide them for greater clarity.
- SP Spelling**
- Problem: Word misspelled. Correction: Check dictionary or use spell check function on computer.
- VOC Vocabulary**
- Problem: Word misused. Correction: Check both the proper meaning and usage of the word indicated.
- PAR Parallelism**
- Problem: Listed items in a sentence are not written in similar grammatical way. Correction: Items (as words, phrases, or clauses), should be constructed the same - parallel to each other. Consult with your teacher.
- Missing Word/Element**
- Problem: Something has been left out of the text. Correction: Supply the missing word or phrase.
- ORD Word/Element out of Order**
- Problem: An element of the sentence is out of its usual place and creates reading difficulty if not distortion of meaning. Correction: Check to see where the element could be better placed.
- Take out**
- Problem: Editor's suggestion is that the material be removed.
- COM Compress**

Problem: Too many words spoil the writing. Correction: Express the idea in fewer words.

P Punctuation

Problem: Punctuation wrongly used. Often the comma, as in SS above. Correction: Change the punctuation.

? Confusion

Problem: The reader cannot follow what is written here. Correction: If the confusion is not evident to you when you re-read, consult with reader for an explanation.

Logic Logical Problem

Problem: Statements in this area do not "add up" according to some rules of logical thought. Correction: Consult with reader. Clarify or change expression or reasoning.

Indescribable Problem

Problem: This underlining indicates a problem encountered by the reader but not one easily summed up. Correction: Consultation is a must.

Gotcha! Right! Yes! Agreed!

No Problem!: Finally! The reader understands well and feels you have made an excellent point!